vi. Application of information technology vii. Application of biotechnology viii. R&D in knitting and garment technology ix. Application of nanotechnology and Plasma Science

(d) The textile research bodies are free to decide the area of their research.

(e) In a competitive market, research and development, innovation and cost-effectiveness are necessary for success. These ultimately enhance exports from the country.

Coverage of weavers under Health Insurance Schemes

3804. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed to increase the coverage of health insurance to two lakh weavers engaged in handloom sector, at a recurring cost of Rs. 30 crore per year;

(b) how many weavers have been included under the scheme so far; and

(c) how much money has been spent so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) In pursuance to budget announcement of 2005-06, a Health Insurance Scheme for handloom weavers was introduced in 2005-06. Budget allocation for the Health Insurance Scheme has been enhanced to Rs. 115.00 Crore for the year 2007-08 which will benefit more than 12 lakh weaver families.

(b) From November, 2005 to March, 2007, 698685 weavers have been covered (both new and renewal cases) under the scheme.

(c) During the period 2005-06 and 2006-07, a sum of Rs. 63.73 Crore has been released to the ICICI Lombard towards Central Government Share of Premium for coverage of handloom weavers under the Health Insurance Scheme.